The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

VOL. VIII. NO. 11. JANUARY, 1901. ONE PENNY.

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A Song of the Old Year and the New.

Time and tide! Time and tide!
Swiftly come, swiftly go.
Time and tide! Time and tide!
Sunshine first, then the snow.

And the proud world passing away:
And beauty and youth sapped day by day:
And the dark hair changing, changing to grey:
And the House of Life touched with decay:
And only Love and Truth abide.

Time and tide! Time and tide!
Swiftly come, swiftly go.
Time and tide! Time and tide!
Summer first, then the snow.

Life with its burden of labour and play;
Life with its gold and purple array;
Life with its rags and daily dismay;
Birthdays and deathdays passing away.—
And only Love and Truth abide.

Time and tide! Time and tide!
Swiftly come, swiftly go.
Time and tide! Time and tide!
Summer first, then the snow,

But there's a World untouched by snow,
A Summer World with Love aglow;
And there's a Year whose feet are slow,
Which yet comes on, I surely know,
With steady march (blow! bugle, blow!)
The Year when Truth shall victory show,—
A World and Year which time and tide
Waste not with care, nor grief, nor pride,
A World and Year the heart inside,
Where Love and Truth for aye abide.

J. W.

The Way of Life,

A NEW YEAR SERMON,

BY THE REV. JOSEPH WOOD.

DEUT. viii. 2.—"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness."

There is a spot on the Riffel Alp, nearly 8000 feet above the sea, where one may see the whole stretch of the Visp Valley along which the traveller has come, and the road which winds in and out so that only short reaches of it are visible to the pedestrian at the time he is on it, now lying full in view like a ribbon of light. The way he has come looks a very different thing now that it stretches below him from what it did when he was trudging its course. From the lofty eminence on which he now stands, the steep hills on the road up which he toiled panting and groaning, seem only slight undulations, and on that glorious Alp, with snow peaks cutting like silver wedges into the intense blue of the sky, the soul exults over the conquest of difficulty and that endurance of strain which has given it this wider vision.

At the opening of a new year we stand, as it were, on a great hill-top, and see the valley we have travelled beneath us. In the wider vision of life we get from our Alpine peak how small appear the difficulties of the way which once

were so great. From this height the little worries, the petty cares, the daily vexations fall into their true places as simple ups and downs on the road, or to change the figure, as simply eddyings in the broad stream of goodness which has brought us onward. And in the exhilaration of the mountains our hope is born again. I know there is a good deal in our experience which might produce a very different state of feeling as we stand on the mountain ridge that divides the valley of the old from the valley of the new. Apart from the obvious reflection that the opening of another year marks the loss of another of the brief golden sections of a too brief life, and might naturally awaken regret, there have been with some so many sorrows in the past, so many disappointments, so many failures, that it is almost marvellous the heart should ever recover itself and still turn to the future with confident expectation. Again, there are those who have been so long anticipating a happiness or a good fortune which does not come that the wonder is the light has not died out of their souls altogether. Yet, even with such experiences, we hail the new year with a hopefulness which nothing can quench, and are ready to augur happy things for the coming time in the faith of the poet that "a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's heaven for?"

In this men are encouraged after all by that look over the way they have journeyed, which at a time like this we all of us take. For it has not been only ill fortune with us, nor do we look back upon troubles and difficulties alone. There have been green pastures and still waters. There have been friends who have made "sunshine in a shady place." And the troubles are not so big now that we look down upon them, nor is the steepness of the way so trying. There is great philosophy in a hill-top view.

The writer of Deuteronomy is here reminding the Hebrews of the long and toilsome desert way they had travelled. That exodus from Egypt, that wandering in the wilderness, all the experiences of that desert life, make an epic poem of the deepest human significance. These things are parables of the soul's individual life, and of the collective life of the great world-soul in which we share. If this poem had no basis of historic fact behind and within it, and were only a work of great imagination, it would still be true in the deepest sense. The pilgrimage of life is just such an experience; the soul's Way is depicted there with marvellous fidelity; it is our own spiritual history we are reading.

Here at the close of the wonderful wilderness journey, the writer stands on some imaginary height and bids his companions look back in memory on *the Way* in the valley beneath, along which they have travelled together. What instruction is there in that for us who now stand on the ridge between an old and a new year?

1. We see that life is indeed a WAY—not a trackless, aimless wandering, leading no-whither, but a way to a destination. It is an engineered path, thought out, with an end in view. It goes on towards a goal. It has intention, direction, definition. Life is not a chaos with no path, no compass, a mere hap-hazard wandering in the wilderness. It is a Way, clear and distinct. On the other hand, life is not a safe enclosed paddock, where we may graze at ease, and be safely protected from all perils. It is a Way in the open and dangerous country, a Way over the rocks and across the streams, and through gloomy woods and frowning gorges—always on. Life is a pilgrim's path, a definite way and journey, leading to the soul's eternal home.

2. You will observe it is a Way worked out for us by another. I did not engineer that road through the Visp Valley leading to the Riffel Alp; I did not mark out the track; I found it ready for my feet. So it is with Life's way—we have not laid it down; another indicates for us the course. All men recognise the fact that only within very narrow limits do they direct their own lives. Circumstances, hereditary influences, environment, civilisation, the age and race into which we are born, these largely shape our souls, and influence our lives, and settle our path. That is the secular way of looking at it. The religious way says, "All these are the tools in God's hand, by which He works upon and within us, and fulfils His purpose concerning us." There is a Providence in life—that is the truth which comes out when we say that the Way has been prepared for us, and the path engineered by another. There is immense comfort in the thought—"I have not to choose my own way; mine it rather is to fall in with the choice of God."

3. The character of the Way is to be estimated not by its present difficulties, but by the importance of the end to which it leads. God says to you. As you would say to a traveller on a difficult path—"Look up; look on; leave caring so much for the track at thy feet; look up, look on to the glorious mountain height already in view." Full little cares the pilgrim for the roughness of the path who knows that at last it leads to home and rest and beauty and joy. Is the end worth the toil? That is the one question. Men say "Is life worth living?" And the answer comes, "Yes! a thousand times yes! since the end repays all." If that be true it is childish to be impatient and disappointed with the Way. More than that: the sense of difficulty conquered, of peril faced and overcome, is itself exhilarating. That is what the brave, true heart rejoices in. Lame, footsore, hungry, weary, what matters it if the spirit conquers and in the effort reaches up to its height and splendour. For when we say, "Life is a Way—Life's end is the thing," what do we mean? Heaven beyond the grave? Compensation in some future world? Ease and comfort in some far-away paradise? No, they are not Life's great end, although they, or what they stand for, may well be ours. But Life's end is something grander: it is developed manhood, character shaped at last into divine beauty, the soul all aglow with the graces of the Christ-like disposition, lowliness and love, and sweet music and heavenly bells within. The end of the Way is that we come at last to our true self, and reach that fulness of being which is possible for us, and for which God made us.

If Life, then, is a Way, and we see clearly its attractive end, all the cares, vexations, and thorns of the journey that are for the moment so trying, fall into their true place and proportion. You know what it is to look at some distant thing rather than at some object that is near, in order to measure the rapidity of motion. If when you are riding in a thundering train you look at the objects close at hand, you will get one notion of rapidity. It will appear to you as if nothing could possibly be more recklessly fierce and fast than the pace at which you are travelling. You seem to be hurling your way through the air, and as if you must dash to pieces the farms and villages through which you are passing. You say, "How disquieting is this extremity of speed!" But if, instead of looking at the things close at hand, you look up and fix your eye on some object in the heavens—a cloud, a streak of blue, or a star trembling in the evening sky—all this rush and rattle and thunder will have an entirely different aspect. You cannot rush past the stars as you rush past the houses. The moon is yonder—"goddess excellently bright"—and you are cutting your way through woodlands, dashing through tunnels, rushing onwards with a mad speed, but you do not overtake the moon, nor disturb her quiet, placid serenity. So is Life and its Way. Look at the things by the roadside, look at the immediate surroundings, and you get one view of its difficulties, dangers, and distresses. Look up and away; look on and onward, see the heavens opened and the end in view, perfected manhood, to which you are travelling, and the danger and difficulties, the dust, noise, and heat of the way die out of your thoughts. Peace and quiet lay their cool hands upon you, and you know that all is well.

4. So we are led on to another suggestion by our text. Remember the Way—remember *all* the Way. See one part only and even that will not be understood. Take it as a whole. Life's way implies a certain wholeness, continuity, purpose, which can only be comprehended in a final result. To you, as to every traveller, much must seem strange and unaccountable when the way is looked at piecemeal. No way explains itself at every step. It bends hither and thither; now it ascends, now descends, obedient to necessities which only he understands who engineered the road. The man who made it took a wide, masterly survey. He saw the starting point and the end; he saw it as it was said Goethe saw life—"He saw it clear, and he saw it whole." It is our wisdom when looking out on life to think of it in the complete idea, not judging it by this bit only or that, but as it makes for one great purpose, even human perfection. Do not look at life in patches; remember *all* the way. Dwell not on particular events and experiences unless you correlate them with life as a whole. Remember not only yesterday's pin-point troubles, remember *all* the way. Remember its infinite variety, its lights and shadows, its green pastures as well as its

rocky passes, its hills of vision as well as its quagmires of despair, its songs as well as its tears, its musical and cooling brooks and velvet lawns as well as its privations, its Elims as well as its hot sands. Remember the beauty of the Way as well as its perils, its deliverances as well as its dangers, its music no less than its burdens, its glorious sunsets and starry nights even more than its storms and darkness.

5. And finally remember the great Companion of the Way. "Behold I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the Way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared." Thank God for the angels who attend us on the Way. That dear friend taken from our sight, that fond mother no longer here in bodily presence, that little child who left our hearts so cold and empty, these are some of the angels on the Way. And the faces of the brave and good, of the kind and true, shine out upon us sometimes in the twilight, and we are cheered by the music of their voices, and by songs which none but ourselves can hear. Yet above and beyond all these, nearer, closer, and more constant is the great Companion of the Way—God Himself, the God of the pilgrims. He who is "nearer than breathing, closer than hands and feet," who has engineered the path, whose help is always at hand, who has bread for the hungry, healing for the sick, rest for the footsore, and comfort for all the weary and wounded—He is at thy right hand through the swiftly passing years.

With such a companion fear not the peril of the Way. Step out into the new year with an unflinching heart. "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." The flame-cloud lights the way. Arise! re-arm for the fight; resume the march; let not the new time find thee with the ungirt loins, the unlit lamp." Thou hast the noblest of all incentives—the friendship and guidance of the Great Companion!

We cannot serve God by accident. We must want to do it, and plan to do it.—*Melanchthon.*

As for the fruit toward those that are within, it is peace, which containeth infinite blessings: it establisheth faith, it kindleth charity; the outward peace of the church distilleth into peace of conscience.—*Bacon.*

"Lohengrin."

By the REV. EDGAR I. FRIPP, B.A.

In my last paper I wrote about *Tannhäuser*, and of Wagner's treatment of his story. I dwelt upon the medieval legend, and its Thuringian surroundings, and then tried to show the great musician's meaning in his version of the tale—namely, the power of good womanhood to save and bless, and to reveal to sin-laden humanity the mercy and forgiveness of Heaven.

We now leave the Wartburg and the Thuringian Forest, and descend to the low-lying land of the German Ocean, at the mouths of the Rhine and the Scheldt. It is a great change. The hills and pine-woods and gardens of roses, the dry sunny atmosphere of Central Germany are gone; and instead, we have the flat, dank fields of the Netherlands, divided by endless canals, which sometimes spread out in long, broad arms towards the sea—a country in old time of boundless marshes, inhabited by flocks of fowl, the home of the stork and the swan. Centuries of hard, brave toil have not obliterated the primitive features of the landscape. An English traveller who stops at Antwerp on his way from Leipzig or Weimar, cannot fail to recognise that he is in a different world; and if he climbs the noble spire of the ancient minster he will look down upon a misty fenland, which is essentially the same in Rubens' pictures, in the legend of *Lohengrin*, in the descriptions of Julius Cæsar and Tacitus. It is a region where man fights with the sea and the frosty clay, and sets brick walls closely against winds and snow, hardening his hands and body in the conflict, a being of rough affections and sluggish imagination.

Yet lowlands as well as highlands have their poetry. They are beautiful in their wide expanse and freedom; and over them spreads the arch of heaven as over the sea, with great stretches of cloud, and glorious risings and settings of the sun. Here in old time dwelt will-o'-the-wisps, spirits of the bog and the mire, witches and werewolves, and shadowy beings which suddenly grew large or disappeared in the woods or the sedge. And here was told the story of the mysterious hero who came from across the water, drawn in a skiff by a swan, to champion the

guiltless; who wrought noble deeds, and then, distrusted by her whom he loved and had saved, returned as mysteriously as he had come, to the distant dwelling of the Immortals.

The swan was a migratory bird in the Netherlands, arriving in the autumn and departing in the spring, a pure white creature, emblem of the divine holiness, which brought joy when the winter darkness drew near, and caused sorrow at his leaving in the warm sunshine. It was easy for the swan to make a place for itself in the tender fancy of the people. In the story of Hans Andersen, the wicked queen transforms her stepsons into wild birds; but she cannot make them ugly, for they become swans, and delight children; and on their strong, loving wings they bear their sister in a net of rushes and willow.

So in the tale of *Lohengrin*, *Elsa* and *Gottfried* are brother and sister, children of the dead *Duke of Brabant*. To keep *Gottfried* from the Dukedom a beautiful witch, *Ortrud*, turns him into a swan, and marries *Elsa's* lover, *Frederick*. Then, by her falsehood, *Ortrud* instigates *Frederick* to charge *Elsa* with the murder of her brother. *Frederick* himself is so prevailed upon that he believes it, and his conviction goes far to convince the judge, the *King of Germany*. Poor *Elsa*, without father or brother, cruelly slandered and suspected, can do nothing but pray. Appearances are so much against her that when *Frederick* challenges none will champion her cause. A second time the herald summons the warriors, and no man will take her part. But Heaven protects the innocent. Up the shining river, from the Unknown, comes the swan, her *Gottfried*, drawing *Lohengrin* in a boat, clad in silver mail.

Now, who is *Lohengrin?* In the original story he was a northern chief, a superhuman hero like Thor or Beowulf. But by medieval chivalry he is made into a spiritual knight, the son of *Parsifal*, who is the keeper of the Holy Graal. Of *Parsifal* and the Graal I will write next month, but for the understanding of *Lohengrin* it is necessary to say a few words about them now. The Holy Graal was the sacred dish from which Christ and the disciples ate the Last Supper. That was the earliest meaning of it. But the minstrels, identifying San Graal with Sang real, or Royal Blood, declared it was the Passover Cup containing the wine of which Jesus said, "This is my blood." It disappeared in evil times, and was only visible to the pure and brave. To seek it was the quest of every Christian, and the vision of it was the reward of a pure, self-sacrificing courage. To the faithful it was revealed as a shining crystal goblet, with wine in it, red as blood and beating—the sign of the real presence. Here, if you will, is the doctrine of Transubstantiation — not, however, in its later prosaic form, justly hated as the chief of Romish superstitions by the Protestants, but in a poetic and suggestive shape, expressing sense of the union of God with man in the higher experiences of the soul, and the miracle of the Divine Presence on earth. Now, *Parsifal* was the purest and bravest of all Christian knights, and to him was entrusted the guardianship of the Graal. He had that cleanness and sincerity of heart which enabled him continually to see God on Mont Salvat, where he kept the sacred cup. *Lohengrin* was his son. He lived with *Parsifal* near the Graal, frequently beholding it and rejoicing in its glory. There he dwelt as an angel of God, waiting His bidding to go down and do His work on earth. One day the command comes. *Elsa's* prayer reaches Mont Salvat, and, in answer to it, *Lohengrin* swiftly descends to the plains and the sea. Drawn by the swan up the Scheldt to Antwerp, he steps into the tournament against *Frederick* and defeats him.

Then follows the wedding, with much beautiful mysticism. *Lohengrin* and *Elsa*, the Heaven-sent youth and the earth-born maid, are married. It is symbolical of the union of Heaven and earth, of the Divine and the human, the Spirit and the flesh, the Soul and the body in every life, the union of the Invisible and the visible, which in this world makes life and happiness. *Lohengrin* is the Soul, who comes from God across the infinite sea, whose parentage is a mystery, whose nature is unfathomable, whose power is superhuman, whose influence is subtle and exalting and incalculable. And *Elsa*, the fair and beautiful, is the body, the mistress of the Soul, whose fairness and beauty are intensified a hundred fold by her union with her husband, and her absolute trust in his authority and guidance. Their marriage is the same as

that of *Arthur* and *Guinevere* in Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," and it is remarkable to find the same spiritualising of the old stories in the German and the Englishman. It is doubly significant that the first to give a spiritual interpretation to the stories in the middle ages were a German and an Englishman—Wolfram von Eschenbach and Walter Map. Wagner's opera and Tennyson's poem lift the mind to God. As *Arthur's* birth is a mystery, so is that of *Lohengrin*. Both come across the ocean of eternity and both depart thither, one led by the three queens in their barge, the other by the heavenly swan. And as *Arthur* exalts *Guinevere* and is himself exalted by her love for him, and in their union they are perfectly beautiful and strong against evil, so *Lohengrin* and *Elsa*, wedded in true and absolute love, prevail over *Ortrud*. *Ortrud* is the embodiment of wickedness. She is selfishness, jealousy, cunning, deceit, and falsehood. She represents the strength, the awful strength, of evil in the world. But so long as *Elsa* trusts in *Lohengrin*, *Ortrud* is powerless against her.

Such is the union that Wagner employs his genius to impress upon us. He makes it as lovely as he can with music and scenery. The day dawns slowly after a star-light night. The shadows vanish one by one, and at last the sunshine floods the walls and gables. Early trumpets sound from watch towers. The city gates are unlocked, and people flock in. The old minster stands out before us in a bright summer morning. Women and girls draw water at the ancient well, and the market-place is full of a busy, picturesque humanity. Again we see the world, with its good and evil. There is suspicion of *Lohengrin*. "Who is he?" it is asked. "What right has he to rule us? Where are his credentials?" So the heathen had asked of *Arthur*, and so the lower side of human nature perpetually asks of the higher: "What is it that it should dictate to us? Does it demand? Why should we obey it? Whence comes this soul that it should be a lord over us?" It is the questioning of everyone in his evil hour, which becomes a dangerous distrust when echoed from the public life about us. Many might stand alone, but the low tone of society gets into their hearts. Its poisonous doubts infect our sense of what is just and pure and true and divine, until we also begin to ask "Why should I respect justice? Why not follow my own self-interest? Why should I be pure and truthful? What is this inward shrinking from sin? Why should I fear and dread evil?" And the voice of *Ortrud* says "It is only fancy; there's nothing in it; the soul like the body has an earthly origin; it is base-born, like everything else. Ask him his name? He is an impostor."

So *Ortrud* tempts *Elsa*, who turns away, and with *Lohengrin* enters the minster. Through the open door comes the sound of the organ and the marriage-hymn, full of high promise and strength and hopefulness and beauty, like that of *Arthur* and *Guinevere*—

> "The king will follow Christ, and we the King,
> In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing:
> Fall battleaxe and flash brand, let the King reign."

But the world is ever there, with its evil curiosities and questionings, which bring death. Doubt of *Lohengrin* is to lose him and die.

We must distinguish between the scepticism that is lawful and that which is unlawful. St. Paul says "Prove all things." The intellect has a right to test all doctrine. Honest doubt as to the things which the intellect discovers, matters of opinion and debate, is good. Indeed, it is necessary. The best thinkers question. Unless they did so they would not leave the old half-knowledge for deeper and better. It is not unlawful to doubt the most venerable conclusions of thought if they seem unreasonable. You must not blame a man for honestly disbelieving the Bible, or the future life, or the very existence of God. You may pity his intellect, but you must not *reproach* him if he has come to these results sincerely. A little more thought may put him right. Give his understanding full play, let it freely work, and he will come to find truth in Scripture, and to believe, as far as by the understanding alone a man can believe, in God and immortality. But there is another and an evil scepticism. I mean that which questions the goodness and usefulness of life, the claim of duty, the honourableness of honour, the sacredness of justice and purity, the loftiness of meekness, the lovableness of love. No words can measure the harm of such doubting. It is not of the intellect, but of the heart. It is of the mind and strength and soul of a man, which ought not to feel mistrust, and never to yield to

it. Whenever you say to yourself: "Why should I care to live? Why should I love the beautiful? Why should I be true to my word? Why should I sacrifice myself for others?" then you have listened to the voice of *Ortrud*, and are *Elsa* questioning *Lohengrin*. The flesh in you is distrusting the spirit, and you are playing with death.

For see what happens. By at last heeding the cry, and allowing *Ortrud's* suspicion to enter, and by attending to her fears instead of giving herself wholly to him, *Elsa* begins to question the Heavenly one. They are alone, like *Romeo* and *Juliet*, happy one with another, beautiful and sacred in each other's eyes. But their relationship is disturbed by her asking: "*Who* are you? *Are* you the son of a king? *Are* you nobly descended?" Every word is a deadly wound. The Christ spirit will not be asked who He is, whether He is divine. He is His own witness to those who entirely love Him. To love Him utterly, to serve Him, to trust Him, is to know Him and His royal lineage. But doubt Him, and you are not His. You immediately separate yourself from Him and show yourself false. It is the truth of Tennyson's line—

"Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all."

It is true of all love, but most true of our love for spiritual things. The divine in us says: "Trust Me not at all or all in all." Truth says it, justice says it, holiness says it. The Voice of the Soul will have no divided, no half-hearted allegiance. Our faith in it must be absolute.

Therefore, though *Elsa's* unfaith may seem scarcely deserving of that name, though she believes in his goodness, and asks only for assurance, it is sufficient. Through the oriel window at which they are seated, overlooking the river, the mystic swan appears to bear him away. Slowly and sadly he bids her farewell, and stepping into the boat, moves down the stream. Farther and farther he goes into the distance, and at last he passes out of sight. Then alone and destitute, human life bereft of God, *Elsa* falls dead.

It is a powerful allegory—a great spiritual poem, intensely religious and intensely modern, united, as Haweis says, "to dramatic action, and filled with noble music." Some go to see it as a drama, others to hear its music; but some go to see and hear and to understand, and *to dwell also on truths which cannot be understood.* There is truth which is beyond statement—reality which cannot be defined. To comprehend it would be to reduce it to the measure of human capacity. There is something God-like somewhere in every one of us, a light which lighteneth every man coming into the world. To our deepest enquiries, it answers, "*I am what I am.*" That is the answer of the soul to all philosophies. From our distrust it flees. Suspected, it loses its authority, and grows cold. But if we follow it and cleave to it, it sends the fire of God into our mortal bodies, and transfigures them. Yes, follow Truth, and it will change you. Follow Righteousness, and it will make you another being. Follow Love, and it will fill you with an exalted happiness. This is the nature of the Spirit; and our poor, trembling flesh must say of it, as *Elsa* should have said of *Lohengrin*—

"I know not if I know what true love is,
But if I know, then, if I love not Him,
I know there is none other I can love."

December Thirty-First.

The years—swift waves of an eternal sea—
Successive break on Time's receding shore:
Here the insurging rise of years to be,
There the subsiding sob of years no more.

Here the gay argosies of proud Success,
Rich freighted, ride to the rejoicing land;
There, with unanswered signals of distress,
Dash Failure's wretched wrecks upon the strand;

While o'er the Future's blue and billowy years,
Borne under varying skies of gleam and gloom,
Press toward the Present fleets of hopes and fears,
Armadas laden with our human doom.

O angry-voiced! O treasure-bringing Sea!
O happy Land, that draws its wealth from thee!
O wiser Souls, that wait upon the shore,
And take whate'er thou bring'st, nor ask for more!

CHARLES G. AMES.

The more delicate and tender affections are no less manly than womanly. They need some strength of character to support them.

Applied Religion.

III.—NATIONAL RELIGION.

Diversity of worship with community of work.

Most men would say that our ideal of a national religion is a manifest impossibility; for, not to mention the thousands who profess no religion at all, sects are so numerous and so various, and there is among them so much jealous aloofness, that pious longings for a union of the churches have become almost a commonplace to the scoffer. Yet underlying all the various creeds there is one common faith, which may be summed up in the familiar sentence: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth!" There is not a religious man in the nation who would refuse to subscribe to that. But we cannot expect that all men shall rest satisfied with a simple belief in the Divine Fatherhood. For, just as our differing bodies require different kinds and quantities of food, so do our differing souls require different kinds and quantities of creed. Common-sense, as well as true religion, should teach us to recognise the right of every man to choose for himself that belief and that ritual which he may find most useful for his spiritual growth. Some men are unable to adore anything higher than a painted idol; others like to bow before the glory of a flame; others can bring themselves to worship nothing but a mental image; some few can leap to a sense of oneness with the Most High. But all, in their diverse ways, are seeking and worshipping the one God; all are children of the All-Father. Then let us be tolerant, but not too tolerant. For the avowed object of a man's worship is negligible by us only so long as that man is sincere. Any man who has outgrown his belief in idol, flame, or thought, and yet continues in its worship, is deserving of our scornful intolerance. Spiritual sincerity may condone even idolatry; spiritual insincerity is the only devil. Nor must we, who have attained to what may seem to us the purest faith, pride ourselves over-much on our achievement. It is certain that our ideas of God must be in His eyes very little more adequate than those of grovellers before their painted image. For God is infinite, and our finite minds can cover but a very small corner of His unimaginable immensity. Beyond our loftiest thought of Him must rise illimitable actualities of greatness and goodness. No doubt the higher man evolves, the more of God shall he be able to apprehend; but it is unthinkable that man shall ever be able to comprehend God in His entirety.

Now, if it be kept in mind that all our sects possess this one common basis of belief in the Divine Fatherhood, then it becomes evident that national worship is a possibility. More than that, it is a reality. For, on Sabbath days, about the prayerful noonday hour, we know that throughout Britain, in every city, and every little hamlet, religious men are gathered together, all seeking and praising, in their various ways, the one All-Father. There is here a mightier spiritual momentum than that which is the aim and the reward of our church worship. It forms a truly national momentum; it is ours, if we have but the imagination to merge into the mass and let ourselves be borne aloft by it. And in this sense alone is national worship a possibility. It is quite independent of the number and variety of our places of worship. In fact, the more numerous and diverse the conventicles, the more likely is national worship to be sincere; for each individual soul has its own individual needs, and it is well that there should be many churches and chapels from which the soul may select that one which is to it most congruent and fit.

But when we consider national religion in its more applied aspect the case is very different. For while our worship must be diverse, our religious works ought to be done in common. But what foundation can there be for community in religious work? There is this—and it is the logical result of belief in the Divine Fatherhood — there is consciousness of the Brotherhood of Man, a consciousness which must, if it exists, express itself in united struggle against the sins and the sufferings that are seething about the doorsteps of every church and chapel in the land. Now, anyone who sees the good work done by all the sects must be pained to mark how often energy and love are misapplied. Some people do the wrong thing through sheer ignorance. Others, though they do the right thing (so far as we can judge of rightness),

yet find their efforts neutralized by the work of unknown rivals. I myself know of an astute woman who kept the district visitors of four antagonistic sects in play, drawing tribute from them all. Was this good for the woman? Was it fair to the real but silent sufferers around her? The remedy is well known; it lies in a recognition of the inevitable limiting force of space; it is the territorial system—a grouping together, for common work, of all the religious people in a given area. And we cannot do better than accept the parish as the unit area. Let every resident in each parish feel that the parish church is in part his property, as indeed it is; and that the vicar is in part his servant in good works, as indeed he ought to be. Let every resident worship where he likes, and how he likes; but let him join in parish work in harmony with all the other workers there. Parochial agencies exist among us in abundance, and they have been brought to a high degree of perfection. What is needed is that every religious person, no matter what his creed, shall have assigned to him, in the common parish work, that place for which he is most fitted. And, in like manner, with regard to those who are worked for, there ought to be no enquiry as to creed; evidence of sin or suffering ought to be an ample and resistless claim on the brotherhood of parish workers.

But, in order that there may be no waste of energy by misdirection or overlapping, some definite organization is desirable. It should be borne in mind that, in the ministry of love, concentration and personal contact are before all things necessary. Therefore, each worker ought to have allotted to him some needy brother, to be studied, sympathied, and helped in every possible way. To each well-to-do family, a needy family should be linked in like fraternal fashion; and in these alliances it seems legitimate that regard should be had to similarity of religious belief. That matters may be ordered wisely, there should be a council in each parish, composed of the ministers of all the various places of worship within its boundaries. These ministers, recognising one another as brother officers in the army of God, would meet regularly in their own parish church, to plan and direct their campaign against evil. But, of course, some parishes are composed mainly of the well-to-do; and others, again, consist mainly of the poverty-stricken. It is desirable that each poor parish should be assigned to the care of a rich one; for the rich folk, having time and money at their disposal, can overcome the difficulty of distance, and can foster in the poorer parish those good works that are needless in their own. And this, again, demands that, for right allotment and oversight, there shall be a ministerial borough or county council, on which each parish shall be adequately represented. Now, in all this organisation, dogmas and creeds have no place; they need never be mentioned. The only rivalry admissible is emulation in good works. Superiority shall belong to that man alone whose zeal and tact and use evince him to be the purest phase of the Most High.

But a national applied religion can do more than marshal the parishes in their campaign against evil. There is the whole sphere of civic duties to be captured and exalted. In these respects, our apathy and ignorance are disgraceful. How many can define the boundaries of their ward or parish? or tell the names of their representatives on the various boards or councils? The fact is, most of our electoral areas are so vast that they paralyze the local feeling of those who dwell in them. But this is no sufficient excuse. Each man ought to concentrate his interest on the comprehensible parish area in which he happens to be placed, and for which he is directly responsible. And this would be greatly helped if our legislators could be induced to pass anything so sensible as a measure which would bring into coincidence the various voting areas—municipal, school board, parliamentary, and so forth. But we must try to make the best of things as they are, and that is to be done by turning our religion like a fertilising Nile across the barren wastes of local politics. And, in the first place, we ought to give as much care to the selection of our local representatives as we do to the selection of our domestic servants. Three things we ought to give especial heed to: that our representatives shall be honest and clean-living men; that they shall be men who are genuinely anxious to serve the community, not mere grinders of the private axe; and that they shall be men of adequate leisure and of proved practical ability. Of course, it must be difficult

to secure all these qualities in every instance; but, if they are erected as a standard, then the more interest we take in local affairs, and the more personal knowledge we get of our neighbours, the easier will such men be to find. Nor should our interest be confined to election times. All the year round, we ought to watch in the newspapers the doings of our representatives; habitually we ought to discuss our local problems with our neighbours; there ought to be, once a week, an open meeting in the parish church, whereat it shall be possible to debate all local questions, and whereby the religious spirit may be outwarded and made effective. In fact, the various elected Boards ought to become merely executives, which shall be animated and directed by the public religious spirit of the parishes.

And precisely the same spirit should rule in the larger sphere of national politics. Religion urges every citizen to do his utmost to think out the problems of national life for himself, and then ally himself to that political party which is most in accordance with his ideals. Further, it asserts his right to change whenever party aims may cease to be the fullest embodiment of that which he holds best. It cares not what party a man may support: all that applied religion demands is that he shall take an intelligent and responsible interest in politics. Apathy and aloofness are evidence of irreligion. Again, religion forbids all passion and rancour in political discussion. It lays down the fundamental axiom that all parties are aiming at the highest good of the nation. This being so, then all differences are mere differences of judgment and detail: therefore, while ideals and measures are open to unsparing criticism, public men must always be held to be pure and magnanimous until they have proved themselves to be otherwise. Further, religion asserts that there can be but one standard of morality, that what is binding on the religious man is equally binding on the religious borough or on the religious nation. Lastly, religion claims that justice must begin at home, that the preferential business of every nation ought to be its internal affairs. and that a nation's first duty should be to secure for every human being within its borders full opportunity for full self-developmeat.

In such ways, then, can national religion make itself felt, not only as a possibility, but as an actuality. The secret is diversity of worship with community of work. Belief in the Fatherhood of God can make one vast choral harmony of all our parted modes of worship. Belief in the Brotherhood of Man can weld into one irresistible army all our philanthropic guerrillas. Thus may it be true that "we, who are many, are one body in God, and severally members one of another."

W. Winslow Hall

A Unitarian Service on Ship-Board.

In writing an account to a friend of a religious service conducted by me on board the good ship *Cestrian*, Sunday morning, October 7th, the thought occurred to me that a similar account would interest a wider audience.

We were two days' sail (steam?) from Boston, and the victims of the sea among us, after eight days' passage, had recovered from the temporary inconvenience of maladjustment to environment. The morning opened gloriously and grew into a perfect day. I was up betimes, for Captain Thomas had asked me the previous evening to conduct service on the morrow, and I needed to prepare and adapt my thoughts to a particular occasion and special opportunity.

Pondering in the early morning upon what my subject should be for an audience composed of members of various denominations, I thought I could choose no better subject than this—"God is love." I thought I could proclaim no better creed than this—"I believe in love"—because I knew that in whatever else we might differ in this at least we should agree. I think, too, that this is a sufficient creed for any of us to proclaim, just this, no more, no less—"I believe in love," for "God is *love*."

Service was to commence at 10.45. It was usually held in the dining saloon, but the day was so wondrously beautiful that I induced the captain to let us hold it on the Promenade Deck. Deck-stools were arranged round, and a covered cylinder-shaped ventilator, draped with the English and American Flags—an emblem-sermon on my text—

served as pulpit. Nearly all the passengers were present, and the captain and some of the crew. We sang four hymns in the course of the service from the Ancient and Modern Hymn Book of the Church of England. I chose the hymns with a purpose: "There is a Book" (*Keble*), "Lead, Kindly Light" (*Cardinal Newman*), "God moves in a mysterious way" (*Cowper*), "Nearer, my God, to Thee" (*Sarah Flower Adams*), and mentioned the fact that the first hymn was by a High Churchman, the second by a Roman Catholic, the third by a Calvinist, and the fourth by a Unitarian. After the service one lady expressed her surprise to me at learning that "Nearer, my God, to Thee" was written by a Unitarian. I trust she will think better of Unitarians in future. I told her that the best hymn-writers of the present day were Unitarians, and recommended her to procure the volume of Horner and Gannett—"The Thought of God."

I read two passages from the Bible, I. Cor. xiii., and part of the 107th Psalm, including the beautiful sea-passage, dear to the heart of all sailors (verses 23—31): "They that go down to the sea in ships." Never before did I realize so fully the true poetry of these verses, robed like the sea with sublimity, terror, and calm. Would those who read this article open their Bibles and read these verses? They form a perfect poem, perfect from the point of view of art, a miniature, as perfect as the most perfect sonnet. One central religious thought—trust in God—is set in its dramatic relations, in the helplessness of man on the vast deep in its fury, "at his wit's end," then the transition, proceeding from absolute trust in God, to "So he bringeth them to the haven where they would be." The rendering of the Revised Version—"So he bringeth them to the haven where they would be"—is here poetically more beautiful than that of the Authorised Version—"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven"—and is quite as literal. The rendering of the Revised Version is also that of the Church of England Prayer Book. Both the Revised Version and the Authorised Version have "distresses" (verse 28, etc.), which is pedantically more correct, but not so poetical as "distress," which, I believe, is the rendering of the Prayer Book version.

Modern poets might be recommended to take a course in the Psalms. I know not where they will find a purer example of poetic art than this. It is often said that a translation can never equal an original, but it seems to me that this contention is disproved again and again in the pages of the Bible. I would that translators of songs—the bulk of them—would study the translation of this portion of the 107th Psalm, and learn Hebrew for the purpose, and not desecrate as they do so many beautiful works of art. There can be adequate translation from one language into another of all that deeply stirs the heart of man, and embodies itself in poetic form.

I also read two poems of Edwin Markham, a passage from "The desire of nations," which pictures to us the poet's conception of the "Christ that is to be," and his "Song to the Divine Mother."

Then, under the canopy of blue, relieved by stray, delicate, fleecy clouds, with our* "Father, the Sun," in splendour and flame above us, trailing his golden reflected robes in a pathway of light across the calm vastness of blue waters, we prayed to that Father of whom the sun is but as* "a word of His speech" and as "a wave of His hand," and then I "spoke to the people." I do not know what exactly I said, but I was happy, and we were all happy. I only tried to intimate what all round us, the heavens and sea, were declaring—the glory of God and the love of God, that we too might be partakers and revealers of His glory and love.

I learned afterwards that in the congregation were one Roman Catholic, one Plymouth Brother, several Wesleyans, two Unitarians, etc. One lady told me that the service was the first Unitarian service she had attended. I said I hoped it would not be the last. I think everyone agreed with what I said except the Plymouth Brother, and he, good fellow, felt it his duty to tell me he did not agree with me. He told me that I had entirely left out one aspect of God—that God is not only love but justice. His Calvinistic

* William Watson. *Ode in May.*

prepossessions demanded more of the Jehovah side of God,* "unpersuadable, relentless, inexorable, executive, righteous judgments."

I told him that all this wove in beautifully with advantage to the whole texture, but he missed his particular thread.

HARROLD JOHNSON.

Twentieth Century Celebration.

[*The following extracts from a circular issued to our churches in Birmingham may be of general interest.*]

It has been thought fitting and desirable that the opening of the new century shall be celebrated in Birmingham by a united gathering of our churches for the purposes of thanksgiving and consecration. The death of an old century and the birth of a new cannot fail to touch the imagination. Time is always moving on, but there are special occasions when the march of the years assumes an almost dramatic aspect, and brings every one into a mood when the mind looks before and after charged with grave and serious reflection.

The century just closed has been one of change and revolution in all spheres of life and activity, and in none more conspicuously than in the world of theological thought. It has been a century of large and exhilarating progress, if not for our individual churches, certainly for the cause in which they have played no inferior part. There is abundant reason for thankfulness in the progress of those more reasonable, humane, gracious and spiritual conceptions of God which have marked this period of time, and in the dethronement of that terrible theology of fear and punishment, which weighed like a nightmare on tender and sensitive spirits. The changes that have taken place prophecy a new and richer coming of the kingdom of the Lord of Love and Life. Looking back on the past hundred years, we glory in the fuller spirit of the Gospel, discerned by a freer spiritual sympathy, which pervades the religion of our land. It would be eminently becoming that we should join in a common and united expression of gratitude to our God for opening the gate into larger pastures and diviner hopes.

The new century dawning upon us offers our churches the grandest opportunity ever vouchsafed by God to the fore-runners of a more glorious gospel. Never did a century open with a larger promise and potency of good. The thoughts and hearts of men are quick with new vitality. The materialism and agnosticism which darkened the sky only a few years ago have passed away. There are signs in our midst of a revived interest in the great deep things of religion. There is a task of noblest magnitude awaiting us, a way of clearest light before us, if only we had the courage, the generosity, and the devotion they require. To win a way for the powers of an endless life among those who have been troubled by many doubts, to show the entire reasonableness of religious faith, to adapt the expression of spiritual realities to the latest announcements of human thought, to bring sunlight into darkened souls, and fertility into desert minds, to open men's ears to hear a divine voice speaking in the march of events, in the progress of ideas and in the awfulness of duty—all this makes a demand upon us which is at once the cause of rejoicing and despair. Of rejoicing since the opportunity is so splendid; of despair since our powers are so feeble for the task. How better can we start upon the labour of the new century but by joining in an act of consecration in which we may win of heaven new life, deeper inspiration and enlarged hope?

It is, therefore, proposed to hold towards the end of January special united services and meetings with a view of bringing all members of our Birmingham Churches and Missions into friendly co-operation for the work that lies before them. It is hoped that the result will be a drawing together in closer fellowship of hearts that are already committed to the great enterprise, and an accession of earnestness and power, not only in our congregations but also in their impact on the teeming life around them.

Of all the riches we brag, we can carry no more out of this world than we can out of a dream!

* Whitman. *The Square Deific.*

Christianity, the Religion of the Incarnation.

NOTES OF A LESSON TO AN ELDER CLASS.

(1) *In His essence, God is incomprehensible*—being infinite—as well as unknowable to human sense.

Job xi 7, 8; Is. xl. 18; Is. lv. 8, 9; Rom. xi. 33.

That which hides God from us is the very fulness of His being; we are blinded by excess of light. Compare the impossibility of gazing into the sun at noon-day. "Anthropomorphism" is therefore unavoidable, as the only way in which the finite can represent to itself the Infinite. We know that God has neither eyes nor ears, nor other bodily parts; yet these forms of speech are necessary to us—otherwise God becomes an impalpable abstraction, and we lose the sense of His Reality.

(2) Let us now consider man's relation to God. *Man is created by God in His own image*, he is *a partaker of the Divine nature, the temple of the living God.*

Gen. i. 27; 2 Pet. i. 4; 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; 1 Cor. vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi, 16.

This relation constitutes the Divine Fatherhood, and makes us sons of God, because His Spirit is "incarnate" in us. Yet while this incarnation or indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a *universal* fact, entitling us to speak of the divinity of man, there are differences in *degree*. The same Spirit dwells in all, but not in equal measure. In all men there is a struggle being waged for predominance between self, with its passions and appetites, and God; the divine and the earthly elements are ever at variance.

Rom. vii. 19, 24.

Is it not possible that in one man the spiritual or divine element absolutely overcame the earthly, prevailing over all impure admixture? *We believe that this victory was actually fought in Jesus Christ.*

Heb. iv. 15; John viii. 46.

A man so entirely filled with the Holy Spirit, to the exclusion of all baser matter, would be rightly described as divine, though not as God—God being infinite; and, while *all* men are children of God, this one would have a pre-eminent right to the title of the Son, on account of his perfect resemblance to the Father. In him the Incarnation would here have reached its highest degree.

(3) Remember now that God is incomprehensible to us by reason of His infinitude. *In Christ we see the divine nature manifested on a finite scale—i.e.*, the only scale on which we can understand it. Therefore Christ in a unique manner makes God known to us—or, God compassionating our infirmity of understanding, and as a concession to our weakness, makes Himself known to us in Christ.

John i. 18; Col. ii. 9 (*cf.* Eph. iii. 19); John xiv. 8—10; John x. 30.

(4) *Hence we come to the Father through the Son*—not exclusively, but best in that way. (In John xiv. 6, Jesus is the Ideal Man, the true meaning of the words being that the qualities of God, in order to be appreciated by us, must be seen as they are manifested in some ideal representative of the race.)

Christ is therefore the Mediator, not by reconciling angry God to fallen man by his blood, but by giving us the fullest revelation of the Godhead of which we can conceive.

2 Cor. iv. 4; Col. i. 15: Heb. i. 3.

Note that, while man is made in the image of God, the writer of Hebrews calls Christ the "very" image: the difference is one of degree, not of kind. This word image recalls to us our former simile; we cannot look into the sun, but can look upon its reflection.

Finally, *Christ is the Atonement* (at-one-ment), by showing us the unity of God and man in his own person. We, by sin, feel divided from God—he, by overcoming sin, is made one with God, and so holds out to us the assurance of the same consummation being attainable by us. He simply realised the potentialities of humanity to the fullest; that which is possible for us all—rather, what we were created for, union with God—became actual in his case.

Summary:

Christianity is the Religion of the Incarnation—i.e., the religion of the unity of God and man, typified in Jesus Christ, who was truly divine because truly human.

The religion of the Incarnation teaches—

(1) That the Spirit of God dwells in all men.

(2) That it dwelt in a unique degree in Jesus of Nazareth.

(3) That in him we have a better knowledge and clearer picture of God than we could otherwise have had.

(4) That the true end of man is to overcome sin, and so to be made one with God.

(5) That that end is realisable, since it was realised by the man Christ Jesus.

J. WARSCHAUER.

An Opening Service for Sunday Schools.

LOVE, AND THE EVERLASTING LIFE.

Children repeat after Teacher:—

O God! whose love is high as heaven and vast as eternity, pour into our hearts this mighty love, and make us loving unto Thee and all mankind.—Amen.

HYMN

Brightly the summer sun shines from the sky,
Cheering and blessing all under his eye;
"Children of God" he seems ever to say—
"Smiling and working still press on your way."

Sweetly the little birds warble a song!
Early their notes are heard, lasting so long;
"Children of God," they seem gaily to say,
"Praise to your Father give, praise Him alway."

Bravely the waters flow, glassy and clear,
On to the sea they go, glorious career!
"Children of God," they seem speeding to say,
"Onward, as God directs, swerve not, nor stay."

Beautiful flowers bloom fragrant and fair,
Sending their rich perfume through all the air;
"Children of God," they seem sweetly to say,
"Be by your virtues known, dwell where you may."

Let not the sun, O Lord, shine on in vain,
Help us from birds and flowers wisdom to gain;
May we with cheerful zeal run in Thy ways,
Spreading the joy we feel, sounding Thy praise.—Amen.

Children to repeat after Teacher, with closed eyes:—

O God! as I am Thy child, help me to grow up, as Thou wouldst have me grow.

Help me to love Thee, my Heavenly Father, with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my strength.

Help me to love all Thy other children as myself, and to do to them as I wish them to do to me.

Help me to be kind to my companions, and to be quick to forgive.

Help me to envy no one, to neither vaunt myself, nor be puffed up with vain conceit.

Help me to rejoice not in wickedness, but to rejoice with the truth.

Help me to bear all things that be right, to believe all things that be true, to hope all things that be beautiful, and to endure to the end.

Help me to keep bright in my soul, faith in all things that are true, hope for all things that are beautiful, and above all, love for God, my Heavenly Father, and all His marvellous and lovely works.

Help me to so live my earthly life, that when I die I shall pass into a more glorious life, where I shall be nearer to Thee, and shall be able to love Thee better.

Help me to feel that what we call Death is but the door of a better life, and that when my body, the outer shell and covering of my ever-living soul, dies and turns to dust, my soul, my real thinking, knowing and feeling self, passes through the dark door of Death, from this earthly mansion of Thy great house, O God, to another of Thy many mansions.—Amen.

The Teacher reads:—

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Jesus said:—Ye have heard that it was said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for He maketh His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

Different children may be called upon to read the following:—

God is Love.

God so loved the world that he sent His Son Jesus to save us from error, sin, and misery: to teach us that God is most holy, just, and merciful, and our loving Father; to endure scorn, poverty, and persecution, even to the death on the cross, without once murmuring at the will of God.

God so loved the world that He sent holy prophets, martyrs, teachers, saints, and physicians, to help the ignorant, poor, sick, and sinful.

God so loved the world, that He made all nature beautiful; the flowers of many lovely colours and sweet scents; the birds with lovely plumage and sweet song; the sun to rise and set in beauty; the ocean to sparkle in the sun, the purling brook to chatter over stony ways.

God so loved the world that He has given us immortality, the everlasting life, of which this earthly life is but a tiny part; He has given us the sure and certain hope of a better world to come, to support us when our path is clouded, when we suffer pain and trouble, when we are persecuted for righteousness' sake, and when we pass through death's dark vale of shadow.

We will often think of this blessed everlasting life, and thank our heavenly Father for this and all His other gifts to us.

We will think of it when we are discouraged, when we are tired of trying to do right, and ask God to put fresh courage into our hearts, and enable us to endure to the end.

We will think of it in our times of happiness, in our times of sunshine, in our times of wealth, in our times of health, for we know that earthly happiness, sunshine, wealth, and health, are but shadows of those in God's heavenly mansions.

We will remember that only to the good will that blessed life be good; only to the pure will it be pure; only to the loving will it bring love; only to the merciful will it bring mercy.

The Teacher:

If you try patiently to do this, you will have peace in your own minds.

Your happiness will be founded upon a rock and you will pass on from strength to strength, until when the end of all things earthly comes, your heavenly Father will say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter ye into the joy prepared for you."

Close eyes.

O Lord God, who has given us all things, if we saw thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, would we not feed Thee, or give Thee drink, or visit Thee, or clothe Thee, or come unto Thee? Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that we would. Then help us to see that inasmuch as we do it to the least of Thy children, we do it unto Thee.

Lord God, lead us mightily and gently on the heavenly road, until we reach that radiance of glory, that bliss beyond compare, and hear the divine song of them that have triumphed over sin, in that heavenly land, where we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.—Amen.

(*All repeat the Lord's Prayer.*

Houses and Homes.

(Hay Mills' Farm, Coventry Road, Birmingham.)

The houses stretch in weary monotone,
Swarming like vandals. Hammers thud, planes hiss,
And trowels clink. The city pitiless
Is ravenous for human flesh and bone.
A gentle homestead, menaced and alone,
Girded with hope and tender memories,
Calmly awaits her ravaged loveliness,
Uttering a silent protest of her own.

A garden, and an avenue of limes,
A door-way ivy-mantled, diamond panes,
Quaint gables and warm tiles, the sweet remains
Of love, the quiet sentiment of home,
A tendril clinging to the feet that roam,
A gracious heirloom from the olden times.

HARROLD JOHNSON.

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FOR THE HOME, THE SCHOOL, AND THE CHURCH.

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THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

The Bad Boy.

Once a little round-eyed lad
Determined to be very bad.

He called his porridge nasty pap,
And threw it all in nurse's lap.

His little sister's cheek he hurt,
He smudged his pinny in the dirt.

He found the bellows, and be blew
The pet canary right in two!

And when he went to bed at night
He would not say his prayers aright.

This pained a lovely twinkling star
That watched the trouble from afar.

She told her bright-faced friends, and soon
The dreadful rumour reached the moon.

The moon, a gossiping old dame,
Told Father Sun the bad boy's shame.

And then the giant sun began
A very satisfactory plan.

Upon the naughty rebel's face
He would not pour his beamy grace.

He would not stroke the dark brown strands
With entertaining shiny hands.

The little garden of the boy
Seemed desert, missing heaven's joy.

But all his sister's tulips grew
Magnificent with shine and dew.

Where'er he went he found a shade.
But light was poured upon the maid.

He also lost by his disgrace
That indoors sun, his mother's face.

His father sent him up to bed
With neither kiss nor pat for head.

And in his sleep he had such foes,
Bad fairies pinched his curling toes—

They bit his ears, they pulled his hairs,
They threw him three times down the stairs.

O little boys, who would not miss
A mother's and a father's kiss,

Who would not cause a sister pain,
Who want the sun to shine again,

Who want sweet beams to tend the plot,
Where grows the pet forget-me-not,

Who hate a life of crying eyes,
Be good, be merry, and be wise.

NORMAN GALE.

Santa Claus.

In spring the sun shines clear and bright,
And calls us out to run and play,
For, though the winds are cold at night,
The steaming ground is warm all day.

When summer brings the birds and trees,
And flowers wave o'er all the land,
We want to play among the trees,
Or dig for sand eels in the sand.

In autumn, when the golden sheaves
Are ranked about the fields in scores,
And ruddy tints are on the leaves,
You do not wish to stay in-doors.

But when the birds and bees are dumb,
And Jack Frost stills the bubbling brooks,
Its then that Santa Claus will come
And bring you lots of toys and books.

Is it not kind of Santa Claus,
To think of little girls and boys
When winter nights are long, because
That's just the time they wish for toys?

GABRIEL SETOUN.

The Land of Nod.

From breakfast on through all the day
At home among my friends I stay;
But every night I go abroad
Afar into the Land of Nod.

All by myself I have to go,
With none to tell me what to do—
Al alone beside the streams,
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

The strangest things are there for me,
Both things to eat and things to see,
And many frightening sights abroad
Till morning in the Land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way
I never can get back by day,
Nor can remember plain and clear
The curious music that I hear.

A birdie with a yellow bill
Hopped upon my window sill,
Cocked his shining eye and said:
"Ain't you 'shamed, you sleepy-head?"

R. L. STEVENSON.